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THE ROLE OF THE AMC IN THE CUBAN CRISIS, 1962 (U)

by

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The Role of the AMC in the Cuban Crisis, 1962 (U)

(U) The role of the U. S. Army Materiel Command (AMC) in the Cuban crisis of October - November 1962 stemmed from responsibilities for executing general logistical support functions. These were assigned to the Command in contingency plans prepared in anticipation of possible operations against Cuba.

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(1) See STRAC OPLAN 316-62, Annex E, p. E-1. Control No. AMCTS 102-62. (2) Ordinarily, an AMC supporting operational plan would have been prepared and would have delineated in detail the responsibilities of the AMC headquarters and of the major subordinate commands. As will become evident, time did not permit development of such a plan until after the Cuban emergency. See AMC OPLAN 316-62, 21 March 1963. Control No. AMCTS 40-63.

(S) The Commanding General, AMC, or his designated agent, was responsible for providing supplies and equipment to satisfy shortages in unit TOE's and to fill supply requirements that had to accompany units in the task force organization. His responsibility included provision of automatic resupply to the task force for all classes of supply except items under the control of The Surgeon General; of emergency supply as required and requested by the Commanding General, Task Force 125; and of such requested supplies as were needed in Class IV operational projects approved by the Department of the

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Army, Navy, and Air Force offensive operation against Cuba under the general direction of the CINCLANT. He delegated responsibility for conducting military operations in Cuba to a Commander Joint Task Force (JTF) 122. The Army component of this joint task organization was Task Force 125, which consisted primarily of the XVIII Airborne Corps, a part of the Strategic Army Corps (STRAC).

(8) As the Army component commander for the CINCLANT, the Commanding General, XVIII Airborne Corps, developed the STRAC OPLAN 55-61 in support of the CINCLANT plan. He submitted this plan for the approval of the Commander JTF 122 on 2 October 1961, but the plan was not actually completed until the summer of 1962. Even before he obtained approval of the STRAC OPLAN 55-61, he distributed it so that it might serve as a basis for the planning of the other commands concerned in the operation.⁵ At the time he forwarded the plan for

⁵ See covering letter on STRAC OPLAN 55-61. Control No. OCOTS 433-61.

approval, the Department of Defense had not yet effected a reorganization of the Department of the Army, though intensive study had been given to all aspects and the Hoelscher Committee had submitted its recommendations. In consequence, the Technical Services completed the automatic resupply computations in support of the STRAC OPLAN 55-61. This they had accomplished by the end of March 1962 on the

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basis of 90 days of automatic resupply. Subsequently, in September
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automatic resupply was reduced to 45 days.

6
(1) Ltr, Chif, Supply Operations Div, DMR, to Major Subordinate Commands and MISMA, 12 Sep 62, sub: Change in Automatic Resupply Requirements for STRAC OPLAN 55-61. Active file, Plans Div, AMC, folder 201-18, XVIII Abn Corps OPLAN 314-61. (2) See STRAC OPLAN 55-61, Annex E-7 (C10), 10 Sep 62. Control No. OCOTS 433-61.

(TS) The STRAC OPLAN 55-61 provided for a time span of 18 days between notification to implement the plan and D-day. When in the summer of 1962 the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that this reaction time was excessive, they directed the CINCLANT to prepare a new plan that would have a shorter response time. In consequence, the Commanding General, XVIII Airborne Corps developed a new plan by 1 October 1962 which replaced the OPLAN 55-61. Designated as the STRAC OPLAN

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During September when the plan was still in preparation, it was known as the STRAC OPLAN 57-62.

316-62, it provided a 5-day reaction time in the event no provision was made for an air strike and a 7-day reaction time if such an air strike was planned. Like its predecessor, this new plan was also

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(1) Interv, Dr. Risch with Maj. J. L. Lamason, Plans Div, AMC, 25 Apr 63. (2) AMC After-Action Report, p. 1. (3) See also STRAC OPLAN 55-61, Control No. OCOTS 433-61, and STRAC OPLAN 316-62, Control No. AMCTS 102-62.

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distributed before approval was obtained in order that other commands
concerned in its support could begin their planning.

⁹
Ltr, Lt. Gen. Hamilton H. Howse to Commander JTF 122, 1 Oct 62,
sub: Strategic Army Corps Operations Plan 316-62, covering Ltr on
plan. Control No. ANOTS 102-62.

(S) Although Headquarters, XVIII Airborne Corps submitted the
plan for approval on 1 October, actual distribution did not occur un-
til 19 October. ¹⁰ At the onset of the emergency, the plan has been

¹⁰
See OSANO After-Action Report, p. E-1. Control No. S-11113-63.

neither approved nor implemented. The intent of the early distribu-
tion was commendable, but no complete copy of the STRAC OPLAN 316-62
reached the Commanding General, AMC before 23 October, about 5 days
after AMC representatives from Headquarters and the Supply and Main-
tenance Command (SMC), attending a planning conference of the XVIII

Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, learned that an emergency situation
existed. ¹¹ At the same time, the office of the Chief of Staff,

¹¹
The delay in receiving copies of the plan was attributable to
the fact that the AMC was a new agency. It had not yet been placed
on the distribution list so that copies for the Command were first
delivered to the Department of the Army at the Pentagon and then sent
to the Command. It has been intimated that copies of the plan ought
to have been obtained at the conference at Fort Bragg. According to
an AMC representative present at the planning conference, no copies
of the STRAC OPLAN 316-62 were available, although by that day they
might have been in the hands of the Adjutant General for distribution.
Interv, Dr. Risch with Maj. J. L. Lamason, 30 Apr 63.

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Department of the Army advised the Chief of Staff, AMC of the emergency.
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AMC After-Action Report, p. 3.

Preliminary Planning (U)

(2) There appears to have been no sense of urgency about this planning in the fall of 1962; it was, in fact, conducted in a normal routine manner. On 25 September, AMC representatives from the Plans Division, Comptroller and Director of Programs, attended a briefing on the STRAC OPLAN 57-62 (later 316-62) at the Pentagon given by officers from Headquarters, XVIII Airborne Corps. The AMC planners received no official instructions to permit development of a supporting automatic resupply plan, but at that meeting they did obtain drafts of the troop list and of the logistical annex to the new operations plan then still under development. While these drafts were

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(1) Ibid., p. 2. (2) Memo Routing Slip, Capability and Readiness Br, Plans Div, to Supply Operations Div, Materiel Readiness Directorate, 24 Sep 62, sub: Appendix II - Annex B STRAC OPLAN 57-62, and Incl, Hq, COMARC to CG, AMC, 19 Sep 62, sub: Troop List STRAC OPLAN 57-62. Active file, Plans Div, folder 201-18, XVIII Abn Corps OPLAN 316-62.

not usable as the basis for support planning, they did afford the AMC planners an inkling of the direction they would need to move.

(C) On 18 September, the Commanding General, XVIII Airborne Corps had advised the Commanding General, AMC that the scheduled completion date for the new operation plan was 1 October and he had requested his assistance in completing the computation of requirements expeditiously. As a basis for this computation, he expected to have density card decks and listings in the hands of AMC personnel by 24 September.¹⁴ Headquarters, AMC in turn advised its major subordinate

¹⁴
Msg (CC 4381), 18 Sep 62. Active file, Plans Div, folder 201-18, XVIII Abn Corps OPLAN 316-62.

commands of these developments and indicated that the equipment density data would be forwarded direct to the national inventory control points (NICP's) by the XVIII Airborne Corps to save time. It directed them to hold this information until the AMC had received materiel guidance for computing requirements.¹⁵

¹⁵
Msg, AMCR-CO-9-3417, 28 Sep 62. Active file, Plans Div, folder 201-18, XVIII Abn Corps OPLAN 316-62.

(C) On 2 October, the Department of the Army instructed the AMC to compute automatic supply requirements, develop transportation movement requirements in support of the STRAC OPLAN 316-62, and preposition supply directives, which would be the initial implementing documents for automatic resupply when it was required. The Department also requested that the AMC advise the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics (DCSLOG) of the earliest possible date at which this work

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could be accomplished. The AMC, however, had neither tactical plan

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(1) DA Msg 919687, dated 29 Sep 62, was received in AMC on 2 October. (2) Memo, Chief, Plans Div, to Secretary General Staff, 18 Oct 62, sub: STRAC OPLAN 57-62. Both in Active file, Plans Div, folder 201-18, XVIII Abn Corps OPLAN 316-62. (3) AMC After-Action Report, p. 2.

nor logistical guidance to accomplish this task.

(2) Actually, the XVIII Airborne Corps did not mail the equipment density data for units on the troop list of the STRAC OPLAN 316-62 until 2 October. By telephoning the 5th Logistical Command which supported the XVIII Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, the AMC planners also learned that special instructions that they had requested, covering qualitative and quantitative criteria necessary for computing automatic resupply requirements, had been mailed on 4 October. These

instructions were not received by AMC planners, however, until 15

17

October.

17

(1) Memo, Chief, Plans Div, to Secretary General Staff, 18 Oct 62, sub: STRAC OPLAN 57-62. (2) MFR, 5 Oct 62, sub: Automatic Resupply Support for STRAC OPLAN 57-62. Both in Active file, Plans Div, folder 201-18, XVIII Abn Corps OPLAN 316-62. (3) AMC After-Action Report, pp. 2 - 3.

(3) On the following day, the AMC, in response to the DA directive of 2 October, advised the DCSLOG that computing requirements could, without interfering with normal NICP operations, be accomplished within 90 days, or by an estimated date of 10 January 1963. If the

Department of the Army required an earlier date, the AMC would have to accomplish the task but with a correspondingly adverse affect on other high priority workloads already imposed on the HICP's. ¹⁸

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Memo, Chief, Plans Div, to Secretary General Staff, 18 Oct 62, sub: STRAC OPLAN 57-62.

(g) Unknown to all but a few, developments were rapidly moving to a crisis. On 20 September, the Commanding General, XVIII Airborne Corps had notified the AMC and other interested Army elements that it proposed to hold a 2-day planning conference on 4 - 5 October at Fort Bragg on the new operations plan. That conference was postponed indefinitely on 2 October because of the incident precipitated at Oxford when James Meredith enrolled at the University of Mississippi. The planning conference was ultimately rescheduled for 18 - 20 October, at which time the representatives attending learned that an emergency ¹⁹ situation existed. When President Kennedy on 22 October gave his

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(1) Msg (C-1368), CG, XVIII Abn Corps to CG, AMC et al., 20 Sep 62. (2) Msg (4323), Oct 62. (3) Msg (S-1252), 17 Oct 62. All in Active file, Plans Div, folder 201-18, XVIII Abn Corps OPLAN 316-62.

report to the people on the Soviet military buildup in Cuba, the Joint Chiefs of Staff declared a DEFCON 3 effective on a worldwide basis. ²⁰

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TWX, ODCSOPS to AMC et al., 22 Oct 62, cited in AMCTS 99-62.